

Grits And Gristle: Cookbook Honors Southern Heritage Through Recipes

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Review

GRITS AND GRISTLE

Cookbook honors southern heritage through recipes

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Moreau, Lynda *The Confederate Cookbook: Family Favorites from the Sons of Confederate Veterans*. Pelican Publishing Company, Inc., 2000-08-01. ISBN 1565546865

This is a terrific cookbook, and some very nice history as well.

The recipes in **The Confederate Cookbook** are not "authentic" in the sense of being from verified Civil War-era or earlier cookbooks, nor do they claim to be. They originate in the family lore of Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) members and their spouses from all over the place. Did you know there are SCV groups in Brazil?

Alongside each entry are the names of the SCV contributor and the Confederate soldier from whom the member is descended. The majority of recipes are from the offspring of humble privates and corporals, although descendents of a general or two - J.E.B. Stuart IV contributed a recipe for spoon bread - can be found in the pages.

Some historical entries just name the ancestor and the unit in which he served. Others are more comprehensive, and their stories are especially delightful. In what other book would you find it recorded that Captain Stephen Ashley Cawthon of the 6th Florida Infantry carried a walking stick that one could peer into to see a miniature of James Walker's painting "Battle Above the Clouds?" He amused children with it until 1918.

The truth of the matter is that many of these recipes could have been produced in the 1860s. CrFme brvITe has not changed in content since that time, although it is a lot easier to prepare with a modern broiler than with an old-time "salamander" device. The three recipes for red beans and rice are from different

sources with differing ingredients, and all are no doubt equally as good. Similar variations on basic dishes can be found in period cookbooks, some based on geographical differences, and others simply on individual taste.

Other recipes are quite thoroughly and unquestionably modern. We are prepared to state unequivocally that no soldier, Confederate or Union, ever sat down to "Hot and Spicy Tofu Stir Fry" or "Seven-Up Pound Cake"! Some recipes are matters of regional preference, as is illustrated by the recipe for "Persimmon Cookies." While persimmons are regarded an ordinary fruit in some areas, old-timers in west Kentucky regard them as too disgusting to feed to pigs.

Those who cook, those who eat, and those who like history will enjoy this book. It would make an excellent item for holiday giving.

Laurie A. Chambliss is the cookbook editor of Civil War Interactive (www.civilwarinteractive.com).